The following is a transcript of Martin Kesselman's 1945 letter about the atrocities committed at Dachau concentration camp, intended for users with disabilities, difficulties reading cursive, or other hindrances that prevent them from accessing the original Internet Archive entry. The letter was transcribed May 17, 2026 from the following Internet Archive entry: https://archive.org/details/Martin-Kesselman-Dachau-Eyewitness-Letter/grandpop-letter-2.jpg.

The letter was written in blue ink and cursive script on a cream white paper, with two pages per image. The spellings, markings, and grammar in the transcript are intended to match the original letter as faithfully as possible. The transcriber has denoted pages by using numbers in brackets like so: [0]. Anything written on the page begins on the next line.

[1]
May 8, 45
Austria

Dear Bob,

To-day is VE Day back in the States – We had a VE Day here, yesterday! Truly a memorable occasion. You'd think most of the guys would be deliriously happy, but no, the Jap prospect really kept things toned down – quite a bit! So far, I don't know just what the hell's going to happen, but the general future doesn't look too bright. I'm very much afraid, that I'm going to be one of the lucky guys who go to the CBI without so much as even a furlough. Of course, no one knows– I may be extremely fortunate but – who knows & whatever the future holds, I'll have to grin and bear it, being there can't a goddamn thing I can do about it. You asked me if I saw any war atrocities! Did you ever hear of Dachau?

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I was there within a few– well perhaps a day after it was captured. Yes! There is a concentration camp there, and I was there. Here's the picture,– approaching the place– on a nice road, – a railroad track runs parallel to the road. As you draw near, you notice a string of boxcars, stretching from a point well outside the camp, to a point inside – perhaps fifty flat-cars total. The cars were similar to the British – in size. They had no tops– only sides. There were others in that string, however, that were completely enclosed, a regular box-car as you know it. ——— You come closer – yes! Bodies– starved, shot, thin, beaten– arms off here, there a leg off – here a skull bashed in – not much blood (They didn't have that much blood in them to bleed a lot!). They were clothed in rags. Bob! Honest-to-God– I was stunned! I just stood there and looked! It took some time before the

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full realization of what I saw before me sunk in! Inside the camp– piles of bodies in the same conditions. Crematoriums with an overpowering stink in them. You couldn't stay in there for more than five minutes. Every atrocity story you read about in the papers absolutely, absolutely true!! There [crossed out] was [crossed out] were doubts in my mind– until I saw Dachau! I am fairly and unshakenly convinced! Look at the pictures that will no doubt be in the papers– and believe it, Bob, because it is true. As true as the sun is in the Heavens! Show this letter to everyone, Bob, tell them about what I'm telling you.

It's about nine-thirty in the evening now, and some guys are shooting flares into the sky – celebrating. Last nite the sky was filled with flares. Everyone that had any flares, were shooting them off. We

don’t black out the windows anymore— it’// seems stranger than, hell, not to have blacked out windows. Don’t forget to send me the paper from VE Day.

I just heard the King of England

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speak over the radio — now they’re broadcasting a picture of the crowds around Buckingham Palace.

I could write and write, Bob, but, I couldn’t begin to tell you about anything, in less than ten volumes, and now, I’ve got a little time on my hands, so I’ve got to catchy up on all my correspondence.

See you— God knows when

Marty